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ABSTRACT

The introductory portion of this report defines teacher education centers and briefly describes their developmental continuum. A synthesis of documents concerning student teaching and teacher education centers is followed by a list of features differentiating conventional programs, student teaching centers, and teacher education centers. Evaluation of center activities is incomplete; however, an abstract of a research document indicating that centers do make a difference is presented. An 11-item bibliography is included. (MJM)

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WHAT IS A TEACHER EDUCATION CENTER?

A Working Paper Prepared as Part Of
the Project to Stimulate Innovations in
Teacher Education (SITE)

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WHAT IS A TEACHER EDUCATION CENTER?

I. INTRODUCTION

A program for teacher training consists of:

1. liberal arts courses
2. education professional courses (Ed psychology, history and philosophy of education)
3. methods courses (methods of teaching elementary math, science, etc.)
4. student teaching (also known as field or clinical experience)

When we talk about teacher education centers, we are talking about primarily that portion of the program which deals with the field (student teaching) experiences.

II. TWO BASIC DEFINITIONS

1. Teacher Education Center (broad sense) refers to any school or set of schools in which field experiences occur.

2. Teacher Education Centers (narrow sense) refers to a specific activity which has as its basis a true partnership between the school and college in which school and college share equally in defining and operating all activities related to student teaching and in-service training and the upgrading of the learning environment within the center.

III. TEACHER EDUCATION CENTERS ARE MADE, NOT BORN

Those activities which go under the term teacher education centers in the broad sense are developments from what we might call conventional student teaching arrangements. The diagram below simplifies the developmental continuum. On the left we have a conventional student teaching activity, in the center we have a student teaching center, and on the right we have a teacher education center in the narrow sense. Regardless of the original usage of the term teacher education center, it is becoming common place in Cleveland and across the country to use the term in a broad sense to refer to all field experience from conventional through the teacher education center in the narrow sense. Teacher education centers (broad sense) fall all along this continuum.*

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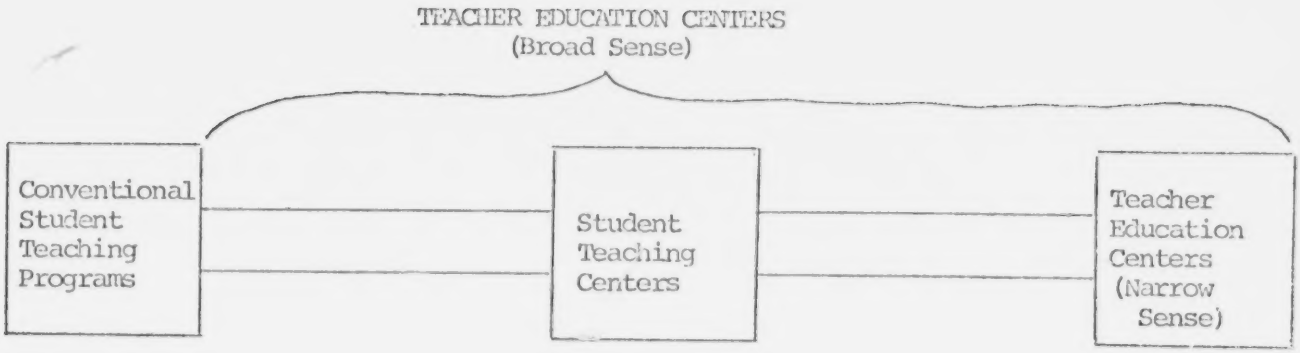
*One must be careful not to make the assumption that the quality of the experience that the student has is directly related to the placement of the center (broad sense) on the developmental continuum. For example, a highly conventional process of high quality may be substantially better in terms of providing a sound learning experience than a teacher education center in the narrow sense which is of poor quality.



Teacher Education Centers Development Continuum

Where any particular center happens to fall on the continuum depends on a variety of factors related to the unique needs of the college, the unique needs of the school system and the constraints on them both. Thus, it is fallacious to assume that the only factor to consider is the decision to establish a center in the narrow sense. Constraints on both parties serve to place the resulting activities on a position on the scale that, while perhaps less ideal theoretically, is the position that satisfies the needs of the parties involved and at the same time is the optimum solution to the quality of field experiences for the student teacher given that particular set of circumstances. There is a wide variety of kinds and types of programs in between the two extremes. Our efforts will be to try to describe the essentials of a student teacher center, and a teacher education center in the narrow sense.

IV. STUDENT TEACHING CENTERS

Collins - Student Teaching Centers, as the name implies, typically are off-campus where by mutual agreement the college or university places a number of students in a school or in a center, which might be a cluster of schools. Originally, while this was a tremendous step forward from having them scattered whilly-nilly all over the country, it still typically perpetuates unilatteral controls and unilatteral decision making. In other words the universities and colleges place them out there, they still take major responsibility of the training of them, up to the point and in fact setting up the standards for those centers, and typically have a high level of involvement as to what goes on once in the centers. I'm not saying this is good or bad, I'm just trying to paint a picture.[3]

LeGrand - Student Teaching Center: A school which is utilized by one or more colleges for the placement of student teachers with a cadre of specific, identified teachers in an on-going relationship between specific institutions. (does not include the concept of sharing responsibilities)[1]

V. TEACHER EDUCATION CENTERS (NARROW-SENSE)

Collins - We (at Maryland) thought that teacher education centers should have as its focus not just student teaching but teacher education at large, not just a portion of the pre-service, but in-service and pre-service together. And while the public school assumes earlier and most essential responsibility for the pre-service, the college assumes increasing responsibility for the in-service, by remaining visibly and actively present in most schools. We saw the center as a laboratory for pre-student teaching experiences, for post-student teaching, graduate, practical and intern experiences. All personnel in those centers were seen as students of teaching. Methods and practice were to brought together in one place.[3]

LeGrand - #1 - Organize laboratory experiences at pre-service and student teaching levels.

#2 - School and college participate in both pre-service and in-service training.

#3 - To encourage innovative approaches contributing to the educational needs of the college students being served.

#4 - Cooperative decision making by college and school.

#5 - To improve the quality of the instructional process in the classrooms by the introduction of new and improved approaches in the class.[1]

Rohfeld - Some of the key center features are:

Good school-university communication

School-university sharing of teacher education process

Clustering and interaction of student teachers

Variety of student teaching experiences

More involvement of school systems in teacher education

More involvement of cooperating teachers in the training programs

Improvement of the schools' programs

In many centers, college supervisors have begun to assume a trainer of trainers role. These supervisors spend more time talking with cooperating teachers and less time supervising student teachers than they did previously.

Where the college supervisors' role has begun to change, the cooperating teacher also has acquired different responsibilities. He assumes a new function as the individual most concerned with the student's training.

In almost every center the simple clustering of students and statement of intention to have a center appears to give opportunities for the student teacher to see themselves as a group, to interact more often, and to feel themselves part of the school or department. When they are in team-teaching situations, they are likely to be more professionally involved in the school's program than when they are in one to one situations.[2]

Southworth - #1 A service function to the children being educated.

#2 A teaching function for both the student programs to enter teaching and experience teachers (in-service).

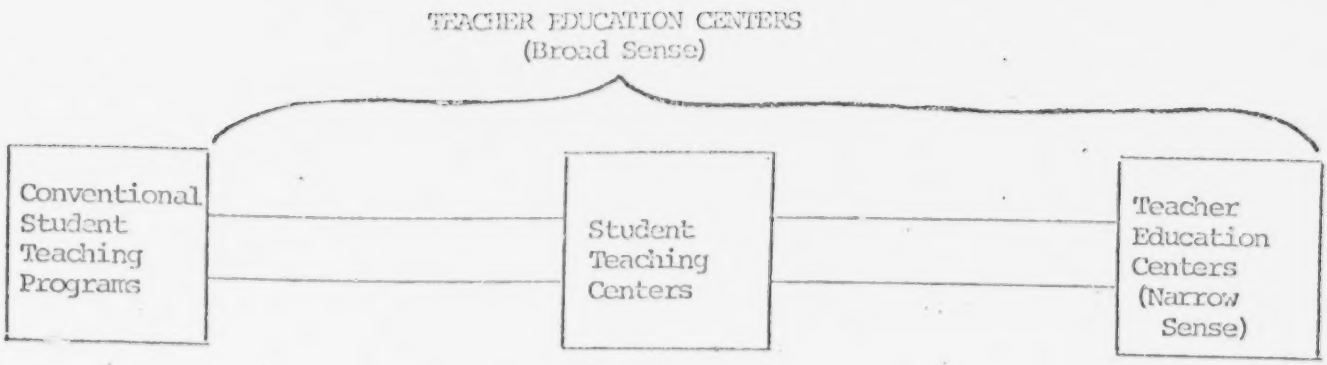
#3 A research function to serve teacher education in the school district.

The term, clinical environment (centers) refers to all of the situations, places, or settings in which a prospective teacher learns about instruction through teaching children, being taught, simulating teaching, or through carrying out such instruction-related activities with pupils, parents, or colleagues as materials development, materials and method testing, confering about pupil growth, or curriculum designing. Usually the clinical environment is a school building, encompassing all of its parts and facilities.

The clinical settings (centers) need to accommodate all the pre-service roles including observer, tutor, assistant teacher, student teacher, and intern teacher. Importantly, the in-service dimension of teacher education will receive greater priority in a more visible and carefully established environment. Experienced teachers will be assigned in residence for varying periods of time in order to facilitate their training to new tasks or differentiated roles. University graduate credit or competency experiences would be designed for the clinical setting.[10]

VI. - SYNTHESIS

The author (Dave O'Gorman) has attempted to synthesize the documents dealing with Teacher Education Centers and offers the following central elements as differentiating features among conventional programs, student teaching centers, and teacher education centers. These characteristics are descriptive in nature and do not necessarily mean that the quality level of the experience is directly related to the more elaborate forms of operation.



Teacher Education Centers Development Continuum

Conventional Student Teaching Programs	Student Teaching Centers	Teacher Education Centers (Narrow Sense)
1. Scattered	1. Impacted	1. Impacted
2. College dominated	2. College dominated	2. Partnership in decision-making
3. No direct effort to improve learning environment	3. No direct effort to improve learning environment	3. A direct attempt to improve the learning environment within the school
4. Methods taught on campus	4. Methods taught at center or on campus	4. Methods and/or other education courses taught in conjunction with center experiences
5. In-service not integral	5. In-service not integral	5. In-service integral to process
		6. Participation of college in numbers 2,3,4, and 5 above
		7. Participation of school personnel in 2,3,4, and 5 above.

VII. EVALUATION

The jury is still out on evaluating centers as compared to more conventional types of activities. This is largely due to the difficulties of defining what a center is in a way that would provide a meaningful basis for comparison. Reproduced below is an abstract of one of the few researches on whether Teacher Education Centers are "better" than more conventional approaches. It was written by David Young of Maryland and is entitled "Teacher Education Centers Make a Difference.) *(ERIC DOCUMENT ED 044356)

> A study was conducted to determine differences in performance and attitudes between center and non-center student teachers. Those in the Teacher Education Center (University of Maryland), a cooperatively developed and administered program, were assigned not to one supervising teacher but to the center staff or a department. The study included comparative data from various center and non-center groups in several different semesters on 1) verbal interaction (Flanders System and Aschner-Gallagher thought process classification), 2) Ryan's Teacher Characteristic Scale, 3) selected categories of Medley-Mitzel OSCAR, 4) self-reported teaching activities, 5) pilot secondary mathematics program, and 6) attitudes and self perception (Child Attitude Scale, Teacher Characteristics Scale, Rokeach Dogmatism Scale, and Edwards Personal Preference Schedule). More center teachers had experience with selected media, team teaching, programed learning, and had more frequent supervisory conferences. They lecture less, have students participate more, show a higher indirect direct ratio for overall teaching, and ask students to elaborate more frequently. They also show greater verbal understanding, stimulating and imginative teacher behavior, emotional adjustment, and favorable attitude toward democratic pupil practices.

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